

THE EFFECT OF FLAXSEED OIL ON WOUND
HEALING OF STREPTOZOTOCIN-INDUCED
DIABETIC RABBITS: A HISTOPATHOLOGICAL,
IMMUNOHISTOCHEMICAL, GENE EXPRESSION
AND BIOPHYSICAL STUDY

BY

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ABSTRACT

Patients with diabetes are susceptible to develop chronic, nonhealing wounds which cause pain, suffering, and poor quality of life. This, together with high prevalence of delayed wound (15%), increases necessity to find new and more efficient approaches for diabetic wound treatment. Researchers have explored flaxseed oil to expedite *in vivo* wound healing. Flaxseed oil is known for its anti-inflammatory and antioxidative effects that improve wound healing because the inflammatory process and oxidative damage are implicated in the pathogenesis of diabetic wounds. However, studies utilising flaxseed oil on diabetic animal models are scarce. This study investigates the therapeutic effect of flaxseed oil on wound healing in diabetic animals in 4th, 7th, and 14th day intervals. The study has two phases: the streptozotocin (STZ) diabetes induction phase consisting of 27 male rabbits and the flaxseed oil treatment phase applied to diabetic and nondiabetic animals consisting of 54 male rabbits, in which a full-thickness skin incisional wound (15–17 mm length) were created. They were divided into flaxseed group for diabetic (n=9) and nondiabetic animals (n=9). Positive control (Fucidin cream 2%) group for diabetic (n=9) and nondiabetic animals (n=9), and negative control (nontreated) group for diabetic (n=9) and nondiabetic animals (n=9). The gross wound was monitored using a digital camera and J image software to measure wound length. Flaxseed group diabetic animals group showed regular and approximate smooth edges of the skin wound with organised brightly coloured eschar tissue. All groups have the same days of complete wound closure. However, the wound healing efficiency was higher for flaxseed group diabetic animals ($p < 0.05$) than the control group. The assessment of skin elasticity for flaxseed group nondiabetic animals had the highest viscoelasticity (VE) values with significant differences for three-week intervals. Histological analyses of H&E and Mallory-Trichrome were used to study wound healing. Immunohistochemical evaluations (*VEGF* and *TGF- β*) with biochemical analysis (ELISA) of (*MMP-2*, *PDGF-A*, and *VEGF*) protein expression was performed on day 4, day 7, and day 14 of wound healing. The wound healing of the flaxseed group accelerated initially by increasing cellular proliferation (keratinocytes, fibroblast, and endothelial cell) and reducing inflammation via modulation of the protein signalling pathway. In diabetic animals, flaxseed oil enhanced healing by reducing oxidative damage through increased activities of endogenous antioxidants as the flaxseed antioxidant activity was accompanied by up-regulation of pro-fibrotic (*TGF- β*) gene expression, which triggers fibrogenesis and angiogenesis of wound healing. These mechanisms were more pronounced in flaxseed groups. This study proved that flaxseed oil is a good product for treating diabetic wounds, either alone or combined with biocompatible and biodegradable wound dressing. In conclusion, the results justified that flaxseed oil can be further developed to obtain new and more efficient dressing agent to treat diabetic wounds and other types of skin wounds.

خلاصة البحث

مرض السكري من الأمراض المزمنة التي تصيب الإنسان في جميع أنحاء العالم ، ومرضى السكري معرضون للإصابة بجروح مزمنة غير قابلة للشفاء تسبب الألم والمعاناة وتؤثر على حياتهم اليومية . هذه الحقيقة وبالإضافة إلى انتشار الجرح الغير الملتئم بين مرضى السكري بنسبه (15)% مما يزيد من الحاجة إلى إيجاد طرق جديدة وأكثر كفاءة لعلاج الجرح السكري. في السنوات الأخيرة، اكتشف الباحثون أن استخدام مستخلص بذور الكتان لتسريع التئام الجروح . إن هذا المستخلص معروف بتأثيراته المضادة للالتهابات والأوكسدة قد يحسن التئام الجروح في مريض السكري، و للضغط التأكسدي دور في التسبب في جروح السكري المزمن بشكل خاص. وبالرغم من ذلك فإن الدراسات التي تستخدم نماذج حيوانية مستحثة بداء السكري ومعالجة بمستخلص بذور الكتان نادرة . إن الهدف من هذه الدراسة هو معرفة التأثير العلاجي لبذور الكتان على التئام الجروح في الحيوانات المصابة بالسكري في فترات اليوم الرابع والسابع والرابع عشر . تنقسم هذه الدراسة إلى مرحلتين :مرحلة تحريض مرض السكري باستخدام مواد ستربتوزوتوسين ومرحلة العلاج بمستخلص بذور الكتان . تضمنت هذه الدراسة 54 من ذكور الأرانب النيوزيلندية البيضاء مقسمة إلى (مجموعة مصابة بمرض السكري) عدد = 27 و (مجموعات غير مصابة بالسكري) عدد = 27 . كانت المرحلة الأولى من الدراسة هي تحريض مرض السكري بواسطة ستربتوزوتوسين لمجموعات مرضى السكري في 27 من ذكور الأرانب النيوزيلندية البيضاء . ثم المرحلة الثانية التي تنطبق على كل من الحيوانات المصابة بالسكري وغير المصابة بالسكري هي كما يلي ، تم تحريض 54 من ذكور الأرانب النيوزيلندية البيضاء بجرح بعمق لكل طبقات الجلد (بطول 18 ± 2 مم) ثم تقسيمها إلى مجموعات معالجة ببذور الكتان (عدد=9 (حيوانات مصابة بداء السكري) عدد=9 (حيوانات غير مصابة بداء السكري . مجموعة التحكم الإيجابي) كريم فيوسدين 2% . عدد=9 (مجموعات مصابة بداء السكري) عدد=9 (مجموعات غير مصابة بالسكري وسلبية) غير معالجة عدد=9 (مصابة بداء السكري) عدد=9 (حيوانات غير مصابة بالسكري) . تم رصد نتائج اكتشاف الجرح الإجمالي باستخدام كاميرا رقمية وبرنامج صور لقياس طول الجرح . أظهرت حيوانات المجموعة المصابة بمرض السكري التي عولجت ببذور الكتان حوافاً ناعمة متقاربة ومنتظمة للجرح مع أنسجة منظمة ذات ألوان زاهية موضوعة بالضبط فوق الجروح . على الرغم من أن جميع المجموعات المدروسة استغرقت نفس الأيام لإغلاق الجرح بالكامل، إلا أن كفاءة التئام الجروح المحسوبة من الوقت المستغرق لإغلاق الجرح الكامل كانت أعلى معنوياً ($p < 0.05$) للحيوانات المصابة بداء السكري المعالجة ببذور الكتان مقارنة بمجموعة التحكم . أظهر تقييم مرونة الجلد في المجموعة المعالجة ببذور الكتان غير المصابة بالسكري أعلى قيم لزوجة (VE) مع وجود اختلافات معنوية لمدة ثلاثة أسابيع . تم استخدام التحليل النسيجي لصبغة هيماتوكسيلين و ايوسين و مالوري تراكروم لفحص أليات التئام الجروح . تم إجراء تقييم كيميائي مناعي (VEGF) و ($TGF-\beta$) مع التحليل الكيميائي الحيوي (ELISA) لتعبير البروتين ($MMP-2$) و ($PDGF-A$) و (VEGF) على عينات الدم وأنسجة الجرح المستأصلة في نقطة زمنية مختلفة تقابل في يوم الرابع، اليوم السابع، وبعد ذلك اليوم الرابع عشر من مرحلة التئام الجروح . تسارع التئام جروح المجموعة المعرضة لمستخلص بذور الكتان في البداية عن طريق (زيادة التكاثر الخلوي لخلايا الكيراتينية ، والأرومة الليفية ، والخلية البطانية) وتقليل الالتهاب عن طريق تعديل مسار إشارات البروتين في الحيوانات المصابة بداء السكري، عزز مستخلص بذور الكتان الشفاء عن طريق تقليل الضغط التأكسدي من خلال زيادة أنشطة مضادات الأوكسدة الذاتية مثل نشاط مضادات الأوكسدة لبذور الكتان، مصحوباً بتنظيم أكبر للتعبير الجيني المؤيد للتليف ($TGF-\beta$) الذي يؤدي إلى تكوين الألياف وتكوين الأوعية الدموية في التئام الجروح وضوحاً في مجموعات مكشوفة بذور الكتان . تُظهر هذه الدراسة أن مستخلص بذور الكتان منتج واعد ويمكن استخدامه لعلاج جروح مرضى السكري ، إما بمفرده أو مع ضمادات الجروح المتوافقة حيويًا والقابلة للتحلل . في الختام ، أثبتت النتائج التي تم الحصول عليها بنجاح أنه يمكن تطوير مستخلص بذور الكتان بشكل أكبر من أجل الحصول على ضمادات جروح جديدة وأكثر كفاءة لعلاج جروح مرضى السكري وحتى أنواع أخرى من الجروح .

APPROVAL PAGE

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DECLARATION

I hereby declare that this dissertation is the result of my own investigations, except where otherwise stated. I also declare that it has not been previously or concurrently submitted as a whole for any other degrees at IIUM or other institutions.

Omar Abdul Jabbar

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HISTOPATHOLOGICAL, IMMUNOHISTOCHEMICAL, GENE
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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Abstract in Arabic	iii
Approval Page.....	iii
Declaration	v
Copyright	vi
Acknowledgements	vii
Table of Contents	viii
List of Tables	xiii
List of Figures	xv
List of Equations	xx
List of Abbreviations	xxi
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION.....	1
1.1 Introduction.....	1
1.2 Problem Statement.....	3
1.3 Objectives	4
1.3.1 General Objectives	4
1.3.2 Specific Objectives	4
1.4 Research Hypothesis.....	5
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW	6
2.1 Basic Structure of the Skin	6
2.1.1 Introduction	6
2.1.2 Epidermis	7
2.1.2.1 Stratum Corneum (SC)	8
2.1.2.2 Stratum Lucidum	9
2.1.2.3 Stratum Granulosum.....	9
2.1.2.4 Stratum Spinosum.....	10
2.1.2.5 Stratum Basale.....	10
2.1.3 Basement Membrane (BM).....	11
2.1.4 Dermis	12
2.1.5 Skin Vasculature	14
2.2 Wounds	15
2.2.1 Wound Healing	16
2.2.1.1 Haemostasis	16
2.2.1.2 Inflammation	19
2.2.1.3 Proliferation Phase.....	23
2.2.1.4 Remodelling Phase	28
2.2.2 Types of Wound Healing	29
2.2.2.1 Healing by First Intention.....	29
2.2.2.2 Healing by Second Intention	30
2.2.3 Wound Healing Complications.....	30
2.2.4 Factors Influencing Wound Healing	31
2.3 Diabetes Mellitus and Impaired Wound Healing	33

2.3.1 Introduction.....	33
2.3.2 Mechanisms of Delayed Wound Healing in Diabetes Mellitus.....	33
2.3.3 Mortality Burdens Attributable to Diabetes Mellitus-Related Impaired Wound Healing	36
2.4 Wound Management.....	37
2.4.1 Current Therapies.....	37
2.4.2 Natural Product-Based Treatment.....	39
2.5 Medicinal Plants as Wound Healing Agent.....	39
2.5.1 Introduction.....	39
2.5.2 Medicinal Plants Used for Wound Healing in Malaysia.....	41
2.6 Flaxseed	42
2.6.1 Introduction.....	42
2.6.2 Bioactive Components of Flaxseed.....	43
2.6.3 Flaxseed Pharmacological Properties	45
2.6.3.1 Antimicrobial Property of Flaxseed	45
2.6.3.2 Anti-inflammatory Property of Flaxseed.....	46
2.6.3.3 Antioxidant Property of Flaxseed.....	47
2.6.3.4 Immunomodulatory Property of Flaxseed.....	48
2.6.3.5 Antihyperglycaemic Property of Flaxseed	49
2.7 Economic Impact and Burdens of Chronic Wounds	50
2.8 Animals Used for Impaired Wound Healing Model Study	52
2.8.1 Introduction.....	52
2.8.2 Rabbit as The Experimental Animal Model	53
2.8.3 Rabbit’s Skin Structure	54
2.8.3.1 Epidermis.....	54
2.8.3.2 Dermis	55
2.8.3.3 Hair Follicles	55
2.9 Diabetes Mellitus Induction in Animal Model.....	55
2.9.1 Streptozotocin	56
2.9.2 Mechanism of Streptozotocin	56
2.9.3 Technique of Streptozotocin Induction in The Animal Model.....	57

CHAPTER THREE: MATERIALS AND METHODS..... 58

3.1 Study Design and Study Subjects	58
3.2 Ethical Approval.....	58
3.3 Sample Size Calculation.....	58
3.4 Diabetes Mellitus Induction Phase	59
3.4.1 Materials Required for Induction Phase.....	59
3.4.2 Animals Preparation for Induction Procedure	60
3.5 Acute Dermal Irritation Test.....	62
3.6 Animals Preparation	63
3.7 Flaxseed Dose Calculation	64
3.8 Wound Creation and Flaxseed Oil Implementation	65
3.8.1 Skin Wounds Treatment.....	67
3.9 Tissue Samples Collection.....	67
3.10 Monitoring of Skin Wounds	69
3.10.1 Macroscopical Assessment of Wound Healing	70
3.10.1.1 Wound Length Measurement	70
3.10.1.2 Elasticity Assessment of Wound Healing	71

3.10.2 Microscopical Assessment of Wound Healing	77
3.10.2.1 Haematoxylin and Eosin Stain	77
3.10.2.2 Mallory’s Trichrome Stain	79
3.10.3 Immunohistochemical Staining of Wounded Skin Tissue	81
3.10.3.1 Equipment:.....	82
3.10.3.2 Materials	82
3.10.3.3 Preparation of Reagents.....	85
3.10.3.4 Antigen-Retrieval of Immune Slides	85
3.10.3.5 General Guidelines	85
3.10.3.6 Principles of The IHC Staining Method	86
3.10.3.7 Slide Analysis and Imaging.....	89
3.10.3.8 Immunohistochemical Scoring of <i>VEGF</i> and <i>TGF-β</i>	89
3.10.4 Serum Proteins Assessment of Wound Healing (ELISA)	90
3.10.4.1 Blood Sampling	90
3.10.4.2 Principle of the Enzyme-Linked Immunosorbent Assay (ELISA)	91
3.10.4.3 Method of ELISA Assay	92
3.10.4.4 Calculation of Results.....	93
3.10.4.5 Determination of Protein Concentration.....	93
3.10.5 Gene Expression Assessment of Wound Healing	94
3.10.5.1 Reverse Transcriptase-Polymerase Chain Reaction (RT-PCR)	94
3.10.5.2 Isolation of Total RNA from Tissue Samples	94
3.10.5.3 Determination of Nucleic Acid Concentration.....	95
3.10.5.4 Agarose Gel Electrophoresis of RNA	95
3.10.5.5 Complementary DNA (cDNA) Synthesis	96
3.10.5.6 Preparation of Samples for PCR Reactions.....	96
3.10.5.7 Synthetic Oligonucleotide Primers for PCR.....	97
3.11 Statistical Analysis.....	98

CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS..... 100

4.1 Results of Wound Gross Assessment	100
4.1.1 General Observation	100
4.1.2 Qualitative Findings.....	100
4.1.2.1 Gross Observation	100
4.1.3 Quantitative Findings.....	105
4.1.3.1 Area Changes and Rate of Contraction	105
4.1.3.2 Rate of contraction.....	109
4.2 Results of Biomechanical Assessment Findings	109
4.2.1 Elasticity Parameters Generated by The Dermalab Device	109
4.2.1.1 Skin Viscoelasticity (VE) Parameter	109
4.2.1.2 Modulus of Elasticity (E) Parameter	111
4.2.1.3 Retraction Time (RT) Parameter of Skin Elasticity	113
4.3 Results of Histopathological Assessment Findings.....	115
4.3.1 Summary of the Dermal Findings.....	116
4.3.2 Summary of the Epidermal Findings	117
4.3.3 Day 4 of H&E Stain Findings	118
4.3.3.1 Skin Wound Histology of Flaxseed, Positive, and Negative Control Groups of NDM Animals	122

4.3.3.2	Skin Wound Histology of Flaxseed, Positive and Negative Control Groups for DM Animals.....	124
4.3.4	Day 7 of H&E Stain Finding.....	126
4.3.4.1	Skin Wound Histology of Flaxseed, Positive and Negative Control Groups for NDM Animals.....	129
4.3.4.2	Skin Wound Histology of Flaxseed, Positive, and Negative Control Groups for DM Animals.....	131
4.3.5	Day 14 of H&E Stain Finding.....	133
4.3.5.1	Skin Wound Histology of Flaxseed, Positive, and Negative Control Groups for NDM Animals.....	136
4.3.5.2	Skin wound histology of flaxseed, positive, and negative control groups for DM animals.....	138
4.3.6	Day 4 of Mallory's Trichrome Stain Finding.....	140
4.3.6.1	Histopathological photomicrograph of NDM rabbit skin tissue stained with Mallory's trichrome stain	142
4.3.6.2	Histopathological Photomicrograph of DM Rabbits Skin Tissue Stained with Mallory's Trichrome Stain	144
4.3.7	Day 7 of Mallory's Trichrome Stain Finding.....	146
4.3.7.1	Histopathological Photomicrograph of NDM Rabbits Skin Tissue Stained with Mallory's Trichrome Stain	148
4.3.7.2	Histopathological Photomicrograph of DM Rabbits Skin Tissue Stained with Mallory's Trichrome Stain	150
4.3.8	Day 14 of Mallory's Trichrome Stain Finding.....	152
4.3.8.1	Histopathological Photomicrograph of NDM Rabbits' Skin Tissues Stained with Mallory's Trichrome Stain.....	154
4.3.8.2	Histopathological Photomicrograph of DM-Rabbits' Skin Tissues Stained with Mallory's Trichrome.....	156
4.4	Results of Immunological Findings.....	158
4.4.1	The Effect of flaxseed extract on serum <i>MMP-2</i> protein expression	158
4.4.2	The Effects of Flaxseed Extract on Serum <i>PDGF-AA</i> Protein Expression	161
4.4.3	The Effects of Flaxseed Extract on Serum <i>VEGF</i> Protein Expression	164
4.5	Results of Immunohistochemistry Findings.....	168
4.5.1	Positive Tissue Control	168
4.5.2	<i>TGF-β</i> Immunohistochemistry in NDM Skin Tissue of Flaxseed, Positive Control, and Negative Control Groups.....	169
4.5.2.1	Day 4 Expression.....	169
4.5.2.2	Day 7 Expression.....	173
4.5.2.3	Day 14 Expression.....	177
4.5.3	<i>TGF-β</i> Immunohistochemistry in DM Skin Tissue of Flaxseed, Fucidin, and Nontreated Groups.....	181
4.5.3.1	Day 4 Expression.....	181
4.5.3.2	Day 7 Expression.....	185
4.5.3.3	Day 14 Expression.....	189
4.5.4	<i>VEGF</i> Immunohistochemistry in NDM Skin Tissue of The Flaxseed Treated, Positive Control, and Negative Control Groups	193

4.5.4.1 Day 4 Expression.....	193
4.5.4.2 Day 7 Expression.....	197
4.5.4.3 Day 14 Expression.....	201
4.5.5 <i>VEGF</i> Immunohistochemistry in DM Skin Tissue of The Flaxseed Treated, Positive Control, and Negative Control Groups	205
4.5.5.1 Day 4 Expression.....	205
4.5.5.2 Day 7 Expression.....	209
4.5.5.3 Day 14 Expression.....	213
4.6 Results of Gene Expression Findings	217
4.6.1 Integrity of RNA Samples.....	217
4.6.2 The Effect of Flaxseed Treatment on mRNA Level Of <i>IL-6</i> Gene in NDM and DM Wound	217
4.6.3 The effect of flaxseed treatment on mRNA level of <i>MMP9</i> gene in NDM and DM wound.....	220
4.6.4 The Effect of Flaxseed Treatment on mRNA Level of <i>TGF-β</i> Gene in NDM and DM Wound	223
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION	226
5.1 General Overview	226
5.2 Macroscopical Findings During Wound Healing.....	226
5.2.1 Quality of Healing.....	226
5.2.2 Rate of Contraction	227
5.2.3 Elasticity of Healing Wound.....	229
5.2.4 Histopathological, Immunohistochemical, Immunological and Gene Expression Findings During Wound Healing	231
5.2.5 Mallory Trichrome Stain Findings.....	243
5.3 Limitation And Recommendation For Future Studies.....	254
CHAPTER SIX: CONCLUSION.....	254
REFERENCES.....	257
Appendix I : Approval Letter	284
Appendix II : List of Publications.....	285
Appendix III : List of Publications.....	286
Appendix IV : List of Publications.....	287
Appendix V : List of Publications.....	288

LIST OF TABLES

Table 2.1	Essential wound healing growth factors	22
Table 3.1	Materials for Haematoxylin and Eosin Staining	77
Table 3.2	Scoring of the histological wound healing analysis	79
Table 3.3	Antibody brand used in IHC staining procedure	83
Table 3.4	Master mix preparation table.	96
Table 3.5	PCR cycling condition	97
Table 3.6	List of the primers for reverse transcriptase-PCR	98
Table 4.1	Wound length mean values against day intervals of NDM group	106
Table 4.2	Wound length mean values against day intervals of DM groups	108
Table 4.3	One-way ANOVA test for the comparison of mean VE non-diabetic	110
Table 4.4	One-way ANOVA test for comparison of mean VE diabetic	111
Table 4.5	One-way ANOVA test for comparison of mean E non-diabetic	112
Table 4.6	One-way ANOVA test for comparison of mean E diabetic	113
Table 4.7	One-way ANOVA test for comparison of mean RT non-diabetic	114
Table 4.8	One-way Anova test for comparison of mean RT diabetic	115
Table 4.9	Histological parameters mean values of NDM groups on day 4	120
Table 4.10	Histological parameter mean values of DM groups on day 4	121
Table 4.11	Histological parameter mean values of NDM groups on day 7	127
Table 4.12	Histological parameter mean values of DM groups on day 7	128
Table 4.13	Histological parameter mean values of NDM groups on day 14	134
Table 4.14	Histological parameter mean values of DM groups on day 14	135
Table 4.15	Mallory's trichrome stain mean values of NDM groups on day 4	141
Table 4.16	Mallory's trichrome stain mean values of DM groups on day 4	141
Table 4.17	Mallory's trichrome stain mean values of NDM groups on day 7	147

Table 4.18	Mallory's trichrome stain mean values of DM groups on day 7	147
Table 4.19	Mallory's trichrome stain mean values of NDM groups on day 14	153
Table 4.20	Mallory's trichrome stain mean values of DM groups on day 14	153

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 2.1	Illustration of the human skin structures	6
Figure 2.2	Human epidermis stained with haematoxylin and eosin (H&E)	7
Figure 2.3	A schematic diagram of basement membrane	12
Figure 2.4	The dermis stained with H&E	13
Figure 2.5	The appearance of flaxseed and its flower	42
Figure 3.1	Surgical technique used to create superficial linear wounds	65
Figure 3.2	Schematic diagram illustrates animal grouping	66
Figure 3.3	Schematic diagram represent animal grouping and sample collections	68
Figure 3.4	The probe as used in dermalab suction cup device	72
Figure 3.5	Multi parameter DermaLab Combo Device displaying screen	75
Figure 3.6	A schematic demonstration of the DermaLab suction cup device	75
Figure 3.7	Summary of the surgical procedure	76
Figure 3.8	Mallory's Trichrome Staining protocol	80
Figure 3.9	Kit of <i>VEGF</i> & <i>TGF-β</i> used in IHC staining procedure	84
Figure 3.10	IHC Staining protocol	88
Figure 3.11	Leica/APERIO CS2 Digital Microscope Slide Scanner	89
Figure 3.12	ELISA analysis experimental conceptual framework	90
Figure 3.13	TMB catalysis by HRP to produce a blue colour product	91
Figure 3.14	A schematic diagram of ELISA assay protocol	92
Figure 3.15	Standard curve generated by plotting absorbance	93
Figure 4.1	Macroscopic wound healing panorama of NDM groups	102
Figure 4.2	Macroscopic wound healing panorama of DM groups	104
Figure 4.3	Line graph of wound length mean values NDM groups	107
Figure 4.4	Line graph of wound length mean values DM groups	108

Figure 4.5	Photomicrograph of skin wound flaxseed NDM day 4	123
Figure 4.6	Photomicrograph of skin wound positive control NDM day 4	123
Figure 4.7	Photomicrograph of skin wound negative control NDM day 4	123
Figure 4.8	Photomicrograph of skin wound flaxseed DM day 4	125
Figure 4.9	Photomicrograph of skin wound positive control DM day 4	125
Figure 4.10	Photomicrograph of skin wound negative control DM day 4	125
Figure 4.11	Photomicrograph of skin wound flaxseed NDM day 7	130
Figure 4.12	Photomicrograph of skin wound positive control NDM day day 7	130
Figure 4.13	Photomicrograph of skin wound negative control NDM day 7	130
Figure 4.14	Photomicrograph of skin wound flaxseed DM day 7	132
Figure 4.15	Photomicrograph of skin wound positive control DM day 7	132
Figure 4.16	Photomicrograph of skin wound negative control DM day 7	132
Figure 4.17	Photomicrograph of skin wound flaxseed NDM day 14	137
Figure 4.18	Photomicrograph of skin wound positive control NDM day 14	137
Figure 4.19	Photomicrograph of skin wound negative control NDM day 14	137
Figure 4.20	Photomicrograph of skin wound flaxseed DM day 14	139
Figure 4.21	Photomicrograph of skin wound positive control DM day 14	139
Figure 4.22	Photomicrograph of skin wound negative control DM day 14	139
Figure 4.23	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain flaxseed NDM day 4	143
Figure 4.24	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain positive control NDM day 4	143
Figure 4.25	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain negative control NDM day 4	143
Figure 4.26	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain flaxseed DM day 4	145
Figure 4.27	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain positive control DM day 4	145
Figure 4.28	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain negative control DM day 4	145
Figure 4.29	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain flaxseed NDM day 7	149
Figure 4.30	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain positive control NDM day 7	149
Figure 4.31	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain negative control NDM day 7	149

Figure 4.32	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain flaxseed DM day 7	151
Figure 4.33	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain positive control DM day 7	151
Figure 4.34	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain negative control DM day 7	151
Figure 4.35	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain flaxseed NDM day 14	155
Figure 4.36	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain positive control NDM day 14	155
Figure 4.37	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain negative control NDM day 14	155
Figure 4.38	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain flaxseed DM day 14	157
Figure 4.39	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain positive control DM day 14	157
Figure 4.40	Photomicrograph of Mallory stain negative control DM day 14	157
Figure 4.41	<i>MMP-2</i> protein expression levels assessed in NDM blood serum	160
Figure 4.42	<i>MMP-2</i> protein expression levels assessed in DM blood serum	161
Figure 4.43	<i>PDGF-AA</i> protein expression levels assessed in NDM blood serum	163
Figure 4.44	<i>PDGF-AA</i> protein expression levels assessed in DM blood serum	164
Figure 4.45	<i>VEGF</i> protein expression levels assessed in NDM blood serum	167
Figure 4.46	<i>VEGF</i> protein expression levels assessed in DM blood serum	167
Figure 4.47	Human breast carcinoma as positive control tissue	168
Figure 4.48	<i>TGF-β</i> expression in NDM skin tissue on day 4 interval	170
Figure 4.49	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed NDM group at day 4	172
Figure 4.50	IHC microphotograph of positive control NDM group at day 4	172
Figure 4.51	IHC microphotograph of negative control NDM group at day 4	172
Figure 4.52	<i>TGF-β</i> expression in NDM skin tissue on day 7 interval	174
Figure 4.53	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed NDM group at day 7	176
Figure 4.54	IHC microphotograph of positive control NDM group at day 7	176
Figure 4.55	IHC microphotograph of negative control NDM group at day 7	176
Figure 4.56	<i>TGF-β</i> expression in NDM skin tissue on day 14 interval	178
Figure 4.57	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed NDM group at day 14	180
Figure 4.58	IHC microphotograph of positive control NDM group at day 14	180

Figure 4.59	IHC microphotograph of negative control NDM group at day 14	180
Figure 4.60	<i>TGF-β</i> expression in DM skin tissue on day 4 interval	182
Figure 4.61	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed DM group at day 4	184
Figure 4.62	IHC microphotograph of positive control DM group at day 4	184
Figure 4.63	IHC microphotograph of negative control DM group at 4	184
Figure 4.64	<i>TGF-β</i> expression in DM skin tissue on day 7 interval	186
Figure 4.65	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed DM group at day 7	188
Figure 4.66	IHC microphotograph of positive control DM group at day 7	188
Figure 4.67	IHC microphotograph of negative control DM group at day 7	188
Figure 4.68	<i>TGF-β</i> expression in DM skin tissue on day 14 interval	190
Figure 4.69	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed DM group at day 14	192
Figure 4.70	IHC microphotograph of positive control DM group at day 14	192
Figure 4.71	IHC microphotograph of negative control DM group at day 14	192
Figure 4.72	<i>VEGF</i> expression in NDM skin tissue on day 4 interval.	194
Figure 4.73	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed NDM group at day 4	196
Figure 4.74	IHC microphotograph of positive control NDM group at day 4	196
Figure 4.75	IHC microphotograph of negative control NDM group at day 4	196
Figure 4.76	<i>VEGF</i> expression in NDM skin tissue at day 7 interval	198
Figure 4.77	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed NDM group at day 7	200
Figure 4.78	IHC microphotograph of positive control NDM group at day 7	200
Figure 4.79	IHC microphotograph of negative control NDM group at day 7	200
Figure 4.80	<i>VEGF</i> expression in NDM skin tissue at day 14 interval	202
Figure 4.81	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed NDM group at day 14	204
Figure 4.82	IHC microphotograph of positive control NDM group at day 14	204
Figure 4.83	IHC microphotograph of negative control NDM group at day 14	204
Figure 4.84	<i>VEGF</i> expression in DM skin tissue at day 4 interval	206
Figure 4.85	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed DM group at day 4	208

Figure 4.86	IHC microphotograph of positive control DM group at day 4	208
Figure 4.87	IHC microphotograph of negative control DM group at day 4	208
Figure 4.88	<i>VEGF</i> expression in DM skin tissue at day 7 interval	210
Figure 4.89	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed DM group at day 7	212
Figure 4.90	IHC microphotograph of positive control DM group at day 7	212
Figure 4.91	IHC microphotograph of negative control DM group at day 7	212
Figure 4.92	<i>VEGF</i> expression in DM skin tissue at day 14 interval	214
Figure 4.93	IHC microphotograph of flaxseed DM group at day 14	216
Figure 4.94	IHC microphotograph of positive control DM group at day 14	216
Figure 4.95	IHC microphotograph of negative control DM group at day 14	216
Figure 4.96	The fold change in the baseline gene expression of <i>IL-6</i>	218
Figure 4.97	The fold change in the baseline gene expression of <i>MMP-9</i>	221
Figure 4.98	The fold change in the baseline gene expression of <i>TGF-β</i>	224

LIST OF EQUATIONS

3.1	Formula of the longitudinal incision calculation	59
3.2	Skin elastic module (E)	70
3.3	Skin viscoelasticity (VE)	74
3.4	Skin recoil time (RTn)	74
3.5	Sample size calculation	74

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

-	Hyphen-minus
+	Plus sign
=	Equal sign
%	Percent sign
&	Ampersand
(Left parenthesis
)	Right parenthesis
,	Comma
.	Full stop
/	Solidus
:	Colon
;	Semicolon
[left square bracket
]	Right square bracket
<	Less-than sign
>	Greater-than sign
±	Plus-minus sign
°	Degree sign
µm	Micrometre
γδ.	Gamma delta T cells
αβ	Alfa-Beta
µl	Microliter
A.U.	Arbitrary unit
ADP	Adenosine 5'-diphosphate
AGEs	Advanced Glycation End Products
ALA	Alpha-linolenic acid
ATP	Adenosine triphosphate
BCAA	Branched-chain amino acids
bp	Base pairs
COX-2	Enzyme cyclooxygenase-2
CRP	C-reactive protein
CSF-1	Colony-stimulating factor 1
CTGF	Connective tissue growth factor
DNA	deoxyribonucleic acid
DNA	Deoxyribonucleic acid
ECM	Extracellular matrix
ECM	Extracellular matrix
EGF	Epidermal growth factors
ESA	α-eleostearic acid
FGF	Fibroblast growth factor
FTU	Fingertip Unit Measurement
GAGs	Glycosaminoglycans
GC-MS	Gas Chromatographic-Mass Spectrometry
GLUT2	Glucose transporter 2

GNG	Gluconeogenesis
α	Greek small letter alpha
β	Greek small letter beta
γ	Greek small letter gamma
HbA 1C	Hemoglobin A1c
HLA	Human Leukocyte Antigen
HPA	Hypothalamic-pituitary-adrenal
HPF	High power field
HUVEC	human umbilical vein endothelial cells
IACUC	Institutional Animal care and Use Committee
IDDM	Insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus
IFN- γ	Interferon-gamma
IGF-1	Insulin-like growth factor-1
IHC	Immunohistochemistry
IIUM	International University Islamic Malaysia
<i>IL-6</i>	Interleukin-6
iNOS	Inducible nitric oxide synthase
IR	Insulin resistance
IREC	IIUM Research Ethics Committee
JNK	c-jun N-terminal kinase
K1-14	Keratin Proteins
Kg	Kilogram
LA	Linoleic acid
LDL	Low-density lipoprotein
LDL-c	Low density lipoprotein cholesterol
LPO	lipid peroxidation
LSO	Linseed oil
MAPK	Mitogen-activated protein kinase
MCP-1	Chemoattractant protein 1
MDA	Malondialdehyde
<i>MMP2</i>	Matrix metalloproteinase-2
MPa	Mega Pascal
MPO	Myeloperoxidase
MRSA	Methicillin-resistance Staphylococcus aureus
MUFA	Mono unsaturated fatty acids
n-3 FAED	n-3 fatty acid enriched diet
n-3 FAED	n-3 fatty acids enriched diet
NAD	Nicotinamide Adenine Dinucleotide
NAD+	Nicotinamide dinucleotide hydride
NAFLD	Non-alcoholic fatty liver disease
ND	NanoDrop
Ng	Nano gram
NIDDM	Non-insulin-dependent diabetes mellitus
nm	Nanometre
NMFs	natural moisturizing factors
NO	Nitric oxide
PCR	Polymerase chain reaction
PDGF	Platelet-derived growth factor
<i>PDGF-A</i>	Platelet-derived growth factor

pg/ml	Picogram/millilitre
PI3K	Phosphoinositide-3-kinase
PMNL	Polymorphonuclear leucocyte
PPAR γ	peroxisome proliferator-activated receptor
PUFA	Poly unsaturated fatty acids
qRT PCR	Real-time quantitative RT-PCR
ROS	Reactive oxygen species
ROs	Reactive oxygen species
rpm	Revolutions per minute
SCP	Single-camera computerized photogrammetry
SDG	Secoisolariciresinol diglycoside
SECO	Secoisolariciresinol
STZ	Streptozotocin
TCR	T Cell receptor
TG	Triglyceride
<i>TGF-β</i>	<i>Transforming growth factor beta</i>
TGF- β	Transforming growth factor- β
TIMPs	Tissue inhibitor of metalloproteinases
TNF- α	Tumor necrosis factor alpha
TZD	Thiazolidinedione
TM	Trade mark sign
VE.	Viscoelasticity
<i>VEGF</i>	<i>Vascular endothelial growth factor</i>
VLDL	Very low density lipoprotein
w/v	Weight per 100 mL

CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

1.1 INTRODUCTION

Cutaneous or skin wounds are injuries to the outermost protective barrier in which partial or full-thickness skin tissue is lost. This disruption of tissue integrity arising from various causes such as surgeries, traumas, burns, or arterial diseases and can result in either acute or chronic wounds. Wounds can compromise an individual's independence, working capacity, and self-image, which may eventually affect one's quality of life. Therefore, appropriate wound management is critical to achieve optimum healing of a wound.

Wound healing process is essentially a series of events that attempts to restore the injured tissue to a normal state, thus avoiding serious complications. It is one of the most complex biological processes in multicellular organisms and can be subdivided into four stages: haemostasis, inflammation, proliferation, and remodelling. Growth factors, cytokines, and chemokines play a key role in the signalling mechanisms to coordinate the healing process. The activation of cellular proliferation is crucial in the tissue repair and regeneration stage. This wound healing process is not only complex with diverse cellular and biochemical responses, but it is also fragile and susceptible to interruption or failure leading to the formation of chronic nonhealing wounds.

Globally, the incidence of wounds with different aetiologies was reported to be more than 149.5 million annually. Surgical wounds are the most common type of wound (73.6%), followed by burn wound (2.3%), and traumatic wound (1.1%) (Antonic, Mittermayr, Schaden, & Stojadinovic, 2011). Generally, most of the wounds have good outcomes. Nonetheless, some wounds fail to promptly progress through the expected